

### **AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of claims:

1. – 3. (Cancelled)

4. (Currently amended) A method of evaluating onset or onset possibility of rheumatoid arthritis in a human subject, the method comprising the steps of:

detecting whether a gene coding a protein comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ. ID NO.:1 is present homozygously in the subject; and

evaluating the onset or onset possibility of rheumatoid arthritis in the subject;

wherein the homozygous presence of the gene in the subject is indicative of an increased step of evaluating comprises determining that the onset possibility of onset of rheumatoid arthritis ~~is increased if the gene is present homozygously in the subject.~~

5. – 10. (Cancelled)

11. (New) The method of claim 4, wherein the rheumatoid arthritis is sporadic rheumatoid arthritis.